

Unified English Braille (UEB) Implementation Plan

Historical Perspective:

On November 2, 2012, the Braille Authority of North America voted to adopt the Unified English Braille (UEB) as the official Braille Code for North America. The formal motion is as follows *"Therefore it is moved that the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopts the Unified English Braille to replace the current English Braille American Edition in the United States while maintaining the Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision; the Music Braille Code 1997; and the IPA Braille Code, 2008. The official braille codes for the United States will be Unified English Braille, Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision and published updates; Music Braille Code, 1997; and The IPA Braille Code, 2008."*

The mission of the Braille Authority of North America is to assure literacy for tactile readers through the standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics.

The purpose of BANA is to promote and to facilitate the uses, teaching, and production of braille. Pursuant to this purpose, BANA will promulgate rules, make interpretations, and render opinions pertaining to braille codes and guidelines for the provisions of literary and technical materials and related forms and formats of embossed materials now in existence or to be developed in the future for the use of blind persons in North America. When appropriate, BANA shall accomplish these activities in international collaboration with countries using English braille. In exercising its function and authority, BANA shall consider the effects of its decisions on other existing braille codes and guidelines, forms and formats; ease of production by various methods; and acceptability to readers. (Braille Authority of North America (2014). *About BANA Mission and Purpose*. Retrieved from <http://www.brailleauthority.org/about-bana.html>.)

In response to the Braille Authority of North America's (BANA) adoption of the Unified English Braille Code the Michigan Department of Education- Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO), with input from stakeholders statewide, will proceed as follows:

Fall 2014:

- MDE-LIO Braille Team will offer regionally based Braille workshops to prepare for the transition to the UEB. Workshops will increase participant's knowledge of the English Braille American Edition (EBAE) contractions that will remain constant along with practical ideas for creating Braille rich environments. MDE-LIO stakeholders believed that these are valuable areas for additional training and instruction.

Spring 2015:

- Frances Mary D'Andrea, Chair of Braille Authority of North America will present a full day workshop focusing on the UEB. This workshop will be available to all VI professionals including but not limited to: Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVIs), paraprofessionals, transcribers and consumers. Workshops will be held on May 13 and 14th 2015 in the Detroit Metro and Lansing areas.

Summer 2015:

As a result of extensive research surrounding best practice for Braille production and to remain consistent with other producers of Braille materials, MDE-LIO Instructional Materials Center will adopt the American Printing House for the Blind's implementation plan for textbook and Braille on demand production. APH's implementation plan as it relates to MDE-LIO's Braille production services are as follows:

- Orders for textbooks in subjects using literary braille (i.e., social studies and language arts), not previously transcribed, will be produced in UEB for the 2015-16 school year.
- Orders for textbooks in technical subjects (i.e., science and mathematics), not previously transcribed, will be produced in UEB and/or UEB with Nemeth Code for the 2015-16 school year.
- Textbooks previously transcribed will be available in their original codes, following APH's policy of not duplicating previously transcribed textbooks and supplementary materials.

Fall 2015:

- Continued state wide regional trainings to be offered in the UEB. Trainings will focus on both UEB rules and Braille instructional strategies for transitioning students.
- Michigan TVIs will be encouraged to begin teaching the UEB to new Braille users. This includes the preschool to second grade students as well as newly diagnosed individuals.
- Michigan TVIs with older students can begin to offer instruction in the UEB with materials in both codes
- Students who currently are proficient Braille readers can slowly transition into the UEB
- All new materials produced by MDE-LIO will be in UEB format

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- Full implementation of the UEB across Michigan
- Continued offerings of regional workshops centered on both the UEB and instructional strategies for implementation